The Nature of Perception and the Dissolution of Perceptual Fixations

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Foreword: A Reorientation of Being

This document serves as a comprehensive map, treatise, and conceptual framework for understanding the progressive journey of perception. It endeavors to articulate a model of reality, self, and perception that departs from conventional frameworks of spiritual attainment. The central purpose of this synthesis is to explore a profound reorientation—one that reframes our understanding of perceptual and existential evolution.

The human perceptual system holds a profound potential: to move from a state of conditioned fixation and inherent limitation towards an unbound and "unlimited" awareness. This document provides a structured conceptual framework detailing this progression, charting a systematic unfolding of perception through increasingly subtle layers of reality.

The journey toward a deeper communion with reality, as proposed herein, is not one of acquisition, addition, or transcendence, but of a systematic **undoing**. It is a path centered on the release, or dissolution, of what this work terms **"perceptual fixations."** We will explore how our sense of self is constructed and how, by loosening our grip on it, we can experience reality in an increasingly unbound way.

This path moves in the direction of the unlimited, a reality that cannot be grasped through conventional means. As a guiding principle for this exploration, hold this insight: ***What is unlimited cannot be known through contrast, because there is nothing it is not.***

By examining the nature of these fixations—from the most apparent constructions of self to the most subtle dualities of existence—we may come to see that ***the goal is not to ascend beyond our reality, but to arrive at an unlimited and radically inclusive perception*** of what has always been present.

Part 1: The Doctrine of Fixation and the Nature of Perception

Before mapping the process of undoing, a clear understanding of the foundational

concepts—Fixation, Self, Layers of Reality, and the Unlimited—is essential. These are not abstract theories but functional descriptions of perceptual mechanics, providing the necessary vocabulary to articulate the subtle shifts that characterize this unfolding.

1.1 What is Perceptual Fixation?

The foundational concept of this inquiry is "fixation." What is the "self" that we experience every moment of every day? We feel it as the center of our world, the stable point from which we perceive, think, and act. But what if this seemingly solid self is not a *thing* at all, but a *process (not a noun but a verb)*? What if it is a temporary landmark created by the very act of perception?

This essay explores the profound idea of **perceptual fixation**—a "reference point" for perception.

Crucially, any such reference point is inherently **relative**, as it can only be defined by its opposite; like a shadow, it is defined by what it is not. To establish "here" is to imply a "there"; to define "self" is to create "other." ***This act of division, of establishing a positionality, is the source of all perceived limitation.***

The primary expression of fixation is **positionality**—the assertion of a discrete perceptual standpoint, such as "I am that," "I am here," or simply, "I am." Each position, by its very nature, excludes all that it is not, thereby introducing division and constraint into a seamless whole. The entire process of unfolding can be understood as the progressive dissolution of these perceptual positions.

1.2 The 'Self' as a Perceptual Construct

This framework posits that the 'self' possesses no independent, objective existence. It is exclusively the phenomenological **result** of perceptual fixation within a given layer of reality. When perception latches onto, or becomes anchored in, a particular layer, a corresponding sense of self is generated.

This "self" is not a static entity but a dynamic construct that evolves as perception shifts through deeper paradigms. It is not a solid, independent entity. Instead, it is the temporary fixation of our perception in one of many spontaneously existing layers of reality.

The central claim, which serves as the axiom for this analysis, is stark in its

simplicity:

Every form of self is a fixation, which is a limitation.

Our purpose is not to deny the subjective experience of selfhood, but rather to re-contextualize it—to see it ***not as a static, independent entity, but as a dynamic process born of perception itself***. What is commonly experienced as "I" or "me" is the result of perception becoming anchored within these spontaneously existing layers of reality.

1.3 The Spontaneous Layers of Reality

These phenomenal strata, termed here 'Layers of Reality,' can be functionally understood as emergent levels of the nervous system's processing. These layers—from conceptual thought to the senses to the bare fact of existence—are not inherently problematic; they are necessary for a human system to function.

The critical distinction is that ***limitation arises not from the existence of these Layers of Reality, but from the fixation of perception*** within them. The goal is not the elimination of these functional layers but the cultivation of perceptual fluidity. ***Subjective awareness can learn to encompass all layers without fixating in any single one, moving freely between them without being bound by the limitations of any particular paradigm***.

1.4 The "Unlimited" as the Directional Principle

The strategic importance of this entire framework lies in its power to shift the entire paradigm of perceptual development. ***Instead of viewing this evolution as a process of adding new capacities or transcending existing limitations, we come to understand it as a process of release and non-fixation.***

This is not a semantic distinction, but a fundamental reorientation that dissolves the very engine of spiritual seeking: the desire to get somewhere other than where one is. This journey is a directional movement toward the **unlimited**, a reality that, having no opposite, ***eludes the grasp of a mind that operates through contrast and categorization***.

Part 2: A Cartography of the Self: The Primary Layers of Fixation

The deconstruction of the "self" is the critical first step in this inquiry because it is

the primary fixation through which all other experiences are filtered and organized. The architecture of the self is layered, with the most prominent strata being the conceptual ego and the deeper, existential sense of being.

2.1 The Conceptual Self (Layer 1): The Self Made of Thought

For most, the journey begins here, at the most common and accessible layer of self-identification: the **conceptual self**. This is the "egoic level of self," a construct built entirely from thought, memory, and self-interest. This is the self that narrates our life, worries about the future, and remembers the past.

In this layer, a person ***feels like they are their mind***. Reality is perceived through a dense filter of concepts, beliefs, and judgments that form the story of "me." This self, however, has no objective existence. It is like a shadow that vanishes the moment the light of thought is turned off.

To grasp this, consider the profound difference between a conceptual self and an actual object, as illustrated in this core analogy:

> "The thought “tree” represents a tree... If you stop thinking about it, it still stands before your eyes... It is not true of the egoic / conceptual self, which ceases to exist the instant you stop thinking about it."

The egoic self, unlike an actual tree, has no objective existence outside of the continuous stream of thought that generates and sustains it. The instant you stop thinking about this self, it vanishes. When perception is fixated at this conceptual level, an individual's entire reality is perceived *through* and *as* the mind.

2.2 The Existential Self (Layers 2 & 3): Formlessness, Oneness, and "I Am"

When this fixation on thought begins to loosen, a profound shift in perception occurs. This next stage marks the undoing of the fixation on thought and form. As the mind's grip loosens, perception opens to a vast, formless dimension.

However, a new, more subtle fixation often takes its place. One might begin to identify with what is formless, leading to declarations such as, "I am formless emptiness" or "I am awareness." The core **duality** at play in this stage is **Form vs. Formlessness**. Perception is still operating with a reference point—the formless is defined in contrast to form.

The resolution of this duality comes with a deeper insight: the realization that

form and formlessness are not separate. As the classic spiritual axiom states, **"Emptiness is form, form is emptiness."** This dissolves the duality into a profound sense of **oneness** or "pure beingness," an all-encompassing reality where nothing is perceived to be outside of it.

This stage moves beyond the conceptual self to a more fundamental, **existential level of self**. This is not the self of stories and ideas, but the raw, simple feeling of "being" or "I am." Its origin can be traced to what is described as the **"reflection of consciousness upon itself."** This reflective process gives rise to the fundamental sense of "being" or "beingness"—the simple, non-conceptual awareness of "I am." This foundational sense of being is the necessary substrate upon which all more complex layers of self-identification ("I am this," "I am that") are built.

Yet, even within this experience of complete unity, a subtle reference point remains, setting the stage for an even deeper dissolution.

2.3 Imperceptible Fixations (Location 4 and Higher): Beyond "I Am"

This is a pivotal and often misunderstood shift where the very foundation of self—the feeling of "I am"—dissolves. The "self" at this level is not a conceptual story; it is the fundamental sense of existence arising from consciousness reflecting upon itself.

Beyond the existential 'I am', fixation persists not as a subjective identity, but as the very **paradigms that structure perception**. These are the layers of "self" that are perceived to fall away in states beyond what one text calls "Location 4."

Consciousness may no longer reflect upon these deeper layers to create a personal identity ("me"), but perception remains anchored in a particular, and therefore limiting, paradigm. These "paradigmatic constraints" function as the unseen boundaries of reality until they too dissolve.

When the reflection of consciousness upon itself ceases, the division between subject and object dissolves. The experience of a separate observer collapses entirely. There is no longer a subject perceiving an object. There is only "seamless reality," a state where there is no subject separate from an object, no perceiver apart from the perceived.

Part 3: The Phenomenology of Dissolution: The Process of

Unfixing

The process of "unfixing" is not a chaotic loss of identity or a random series of spiritual experiences. Instead, it follows a coherent, discernible, and observable phenomenological pattern. Understanding this pattern provides a vital cartography for interpreting the profound shifts in perception that mark this journey.

3.1 The Inherent Pattern of Unfolding

Across the entire spectrum of this development, a recurring three-step pattern can be observed as perception moves into and through a new, deeper Layer of Reality:

1. **Perceiving a Layer as Foundation:** A layer is initially perceived as the fundamental source, ground, container, or totality of reality itself.
2. **Identifying With the Layer:** Perception then centers *in* the layer, creating an identity in which the observer perceives *as* the layer or *from* it. (e.g., "I am awareness," or "I am the universe experiencing itself").
3. **Dissolution and Expansion:** The fixation in that layer falls away, resolving a previously unrecognized duality and revealing a more expansive, inclusive paradigm.

This recurring pattern of resolving dualities is the primary mechanism for moving into deeper and more inclusive states of perception.

3.2 A Trajectory of Resolving Dualities

The journey into non-fixation can be mapped as a progressive resolution of increasingly subtle dualities. Each stage represents a more profound integration of reality.

1. **Form vs. Formlessness:** The initial shift away from the conceptual mind (Layer 1, thesis) often involves a fixation in its opposite: the formless (antithesis). Identifications such as "I am formless emptiness" arise, establishing a duality between the world of form and the realm of formlessness.
2. **The Oneness of Being:** This duality is resolved when form and formlessness are perceived as inseparable aspects of a single reality (synthesis). The state is one of "oneness" or "pure beingness," perfectly captured by the formulation, "Emptiness is form, form is emptiness." All of existence is seen as

a singular, unified field, which feels complete and absolute.

3. **Being vs. Non-Being:** Even in this apparent completeness, a subtle duality remains. The fixation in the **condition of being** implies the existence of its opposite: non-being. The subsequent dissolution involves the falling away of this final subjective fixation (often around what has been called “Location 4” or later). This resolves the polarity, revealing a perception not of *being*, but of **pure, spontaneous existence** unfolding without any state or condition, including that of being. When that falls away there is no being, there is no non-being. There is only existence in spontaneous unfolding.
4. **The Actual vs. The Potential:** The perception of pure existence, while unified, is still fixated in reality as something *local* and *actual*—it is "here and now." The next major shift undoes this fixation. Reality is no longer perceived as a collection of actualized objects and events but as a field of **non-local potentiality**. This ***potential is not a future possibility—'what could be'—but is the very substance of 'what is.'*** From this vantage point, **time is revealed to be merely an "artifact of the sequential unfolding of potentiality." *Everything exists simultaneously*.** All of reality is perceived as this potential, **already accomplished** and simultaneously expressing itself.
5. **Existence vs. Non-Existence (The Ground of Non-Existence):** A still deeper unfolding reveals a perception of complete absence or "non-existence." Perception can move even deeper, to a ground of "***a complete absence of existence except for the potential for awareness.***" This is a state ***prior to the universe, where time, space, and all manifestation*** are gone. When the senses return from this perspective, the experience can be profoundly disorienting, as one perceives a manifest, physical universe that subjectively **feels as though it doesn't exist.** Nothing feels truly "here."
6. **The Final Integration (Super-Integration):** Ultimately, a "super integration" can occur where ***all primacy and directionality dissolve. The fixation in any single layer falls away***. The primacy of non-existence as a "source" for existence (like roots to a tree) is seen through. Instead, **existence, potential, and non-existence are perceived as a single, unified, and indivisible whole.** There is no causality, no directionality, no roots and no branches, no primary source and secondary manifestation. It is a reality where **"Nothing causes anything."**

This ever-deepening progression of perceptual states raises a crucial question: ***amidst all this change, is there anything that remains constant?***

Part 4: The Unchanging Constant: The Mystery of Awareness

Across the entire spectrum of phenomenological states—from the dense fixation of the egoic mind to the radical emptiness of non-existence—a central mystery persists: the **condition of being aware** remains. This fundamental capacity for experience (subjectivity) appears to be the ultimate context for reality itself.

4.1 The Unchanging Witness

A common error and key insight in this journey is that ***we often mistake the layer of perception for awareness itself*.**

For instance, one might experience the "changeless infinite field" of Layer 3 and conclude, "This field *is* awareness." When the perceptual fixation in that layer falls away (moving into Layer 4), one then mistakenly believes that awareness itself has disappeared.

One text shares this direct experience: "This happened to me. After moving beyond the boundless sense of Layer 3, I experienced the shift into Layer 4. Suddenly 'awareness' was gone, and I was very disturbed. At this point, my idea of awareness was fused with the experience of Layer 3... Yet the fundamental condition of being aware never went away; it was simply appearing as intrinsic to existence itself."

The condition of "being aware" never vanishes. As each deeper Layer of Reality is revealed, it becomes transparent to awareness, which then appears to be an intrinsic quality of that new layer. It is as if ***every deeper layer is just transparent to awareness***. Its nature reveals itself differently through various depths:

- At one depth, it can appear as **intrinsic to existence itself**.
- At another, as an **infinite mind** in which reality is an epiphenomenon.
- At another, as the very **potential for awareness** in the absence of all qualities.

4.2 Awareness is Not a State

This leads to a critical conclusion, a truth that stands independent of any particular state. This fundamental truth is captured perfectly in this final passage:

> **"That which experiences all states, is itself not a state. It is all states yet is independent of all of them."**

Awareness is the **context**, not the content. It is the infinite context in which all states are experienced, shining through all states of perception, yet it is reducible to none of them. It is the silent, unchanging witness to an ever-changing world of experience.

This reveals Awareness as the ultimate ground of non-fixation—the unconditioned context in which all fixations, and their undoing, can occur. It is not a state to be achieved but the ever-present reality that makes all states perceptible.

To explore this for yourself, here is a direct pointer: **"When you pay attention to what is perceiving what is perceiving, you might suddenly see through the veils of all the layers of perception."**

4.3 The Equality of All States and Unconditional Freedom

The realization that Awareness is independent of all states carries a profound implication. If Awareness is the constant, then no state of perception—no matter how seemingly "deep" or "shallow," "spiritual" or "mundane"—can bring one closer to it or take one farther away.

It is equally present in moments of profound insight and mundane distraction.

This recognition bestows an **unconditional freedom**. It is a freedom that is not dependent on achieving or maintaining any particular state of perception. It is a freedom ***of*** perception, not a freedom ***from*** certain experiences. The ceaseless striving for a "better" or "higher" state is revealed as unnecessary. When this is seen with clarity, all states and all of reality are rendered equal in their magnificent expression.

Part 5: The Great Reorientation: From Transcendence to Non-Fixation

Understanding this journey reframes its entire purpose. Orienting one's perceptual journey towards "the unlimited" fundamentally alters its nature. The traditional goal of achieving specific states or transcending reality gives way to a more profound and inclusive paradigm of non-fixation.

5.1 The Fallacy of Transcendence

The strategic importance of re-evaluating the very goal of the path cannot be

overstated. For millennia, the guiding metaphor has been one of **transcendence**—of going beyond, rising above, or escaping the limitations of the material world.

However, a deeper analysis reveals this concept to be inherently **dualistic**. The very notion of transcendence relies on a reference point. It immediately creates a division between what is being left behind and what is being moved toward. It begs the questions:

"Far out from what?"

"Where would you go? In contrast to what?"

Directionality itself is a fixation. A journey oriented toward "transcendence," therefore, remains caught within the limited, dualistic paradigm it seeks to overcome.

5.2 The Praxis of Radical Inclusion and Non-Fixation

The alternative paradigm proposed here is one of "increasing non-fixation" and "inclusion." This is not a passive acceptance, but an active, **radical, unconditional inclusion** of everything.

For perception to be truly unlimited, nothing can be excluded, as any act of exclusion would itself be a limitation. This framework embraces everything—higher and lower, self and no-self, spiritual and unspiritual—without division, recognizing all phenomena as expressions of a single, undivided potential.

This shift from a philosophy of transcendence to one of inclusion is not merely a noble preference; it is a **functional necessity** grounded in the very architecture of our being. The analogy of the nervous system makes this clear:

The underlying perceptual mechanisms that allow a human being to function—to locate objects in space, to form concepts, to maintain a sense of self—**cannot "go away."** They are **ineliminable processes** required for the body to navigate its environment.

Any philosophy aiming for transcendence, defined as the escape from or removal of these foundational layers, is therefore based on a false premise. It is a goal that

is functionally impossible.

Thus, non-fixated inclusion emerges as the only viable path. Subjective perception can learn to move through these layers with fluidity, without being fixated *in* them and thus limited *by* them, but it cannot erase them. The ultimate goal is a state where "subjective awareness can encompass everything without fixating in anything."

Part 6: Conclusion: A Reality Already Accomplished

This treatise has sought to articulate a path of undoing rather than achieving. We have explored the self not as an entity but as a process of perceptual fixation, and freedom not as a destination but as the release from these fixations. The "self" is not a static thing to be found or lost, but a dynamic process of perception fixating and un-fixating in various layers of reality.

When this is seen with clarity, we realize there is neither a "self" to defend nor a "loss of self" to fear—there is only the movement of perception.

This recognition brings the journey of spiritual seeking to a natural end. When we truly see this process for what it is, our interest in manipulating our experience to get somewhere falls away. Evolution still happens, as existence is never static. But the unfolding continues without the anxious pursuit or friction of a self trying to acquire or hold onto any particular state.

From this understanding, the ultimate orientation becomes clear. It is not a flight toward a dualistic transcendence but a grounded, embodied movement toward all-inclusive non-fixation. It is the capacity to allow everything to be as it is, without being defined or limited by any of it.

This leads us to a place of profound peace and contemplation, leaving us with two powerful questions to hold:

Can you allow everything in every instant to be included without fixating in any of it?

What is there to achieve when reality is already accomplished?

The great work is not to build, achieve, or attain a future state of perfection. It is to see through the perceptual habits that obscure the magnificent, unconditional

nature of what already is. This comprehensive understanding does not eliminate the wonder of existence but deepens it.

The great mystery that remains is not how to complete ourselves, but the enduring wonder of why there is something, and not nothing, at all.